

Dysart School

Our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy

When did we adopt this strategy? Summer Term 2020

When was this strategy last reviewed? Spring term 2023

When do we need to next review this strategy? Summer term 2024

Named mental health lead: Joanna Williams

Who contributed to this strategy?

- Joanna Williams, Assistant Principal
- Sarah Lambe, Educational Psychologist
- The Senior Leadership Team
- Dysart School's Governors
- The 'Change Team' ~ Parent hub, Staff hub and Pupil hub.

Who was consulted about this strategy?

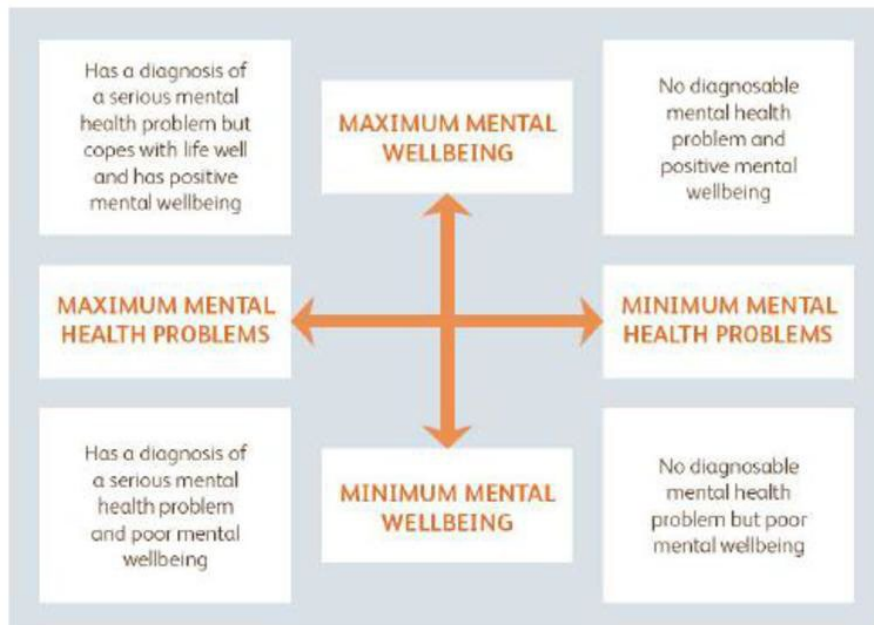
Dysart school's staff team

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing at our School

Definition of mental health ~ by 'The Mental Health Foundation'

"A positive sense of well-being which enables an individual to be able to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life. People in good mental health have the ability to recover effectively from illness, change or misfortune."

Emotional wellbeing is a continuum and we will all experience episodes of poor emotional health and wellbeing during our lives, whether we have a diagnosis of a mental health illness or whether we generally experience good mental health.



Adapted from: Tudor K 1996

We believe that everyone at Dysart has a responsibility to promote positive mental health, and to understand about protective and risk factors for mental health. Some children and young people will require additional help and all staff should have the skills to look out for any early warning signs of mental health problems and ensure that children with mental health needs get early intervention and the support they need.

All staff have an awareness that our pupils are at risk of developing a co-occurring mental health condition alongside their SEN diagnosis. All members of the SLT and teaching team are aware of the possible risk factors that might make some of our children and young people even more likely to experience problems, such as: physical long-term illness, having a parent who has a mental health problem, death and loss, including loss of friendships and family breakdown. (see appendix 1 on risk and protective factors).

It is everybody in our school's responsibility to remain curious when they notice a change in a child, young person or adult's behaviour and interactions. Where this is a safeguarding concern, all members of staff, both in the classroom, and in the wider school, report this **immediately** to a member of the safeguarding team and after doing so, complete a 'CPOMS' entry. Any concerns about a child's, young person's (or adults) mental health and emotional wellbeing which are not safeguarding, report these to the class teacher or SLT member as well as completing a 'request for support form' for a child or young person which will be discussed by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team (MHWB).

Why do we need this strategy?

Our Pupils

At Dysart School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for our whole school community (pupils, staff, parents and carers), and recognise that mental health and emotional wellbeing has the same importance as physical health. We recognise that children's mental health is a crucial factor in their overall wellbeing and can impact upon their learning and achievement.

At Dysart, we recognise that our pupils are at greater risk of developing mental health problems due to their Special Educational Needs. The "Count Us In Inquiry" estimated that at any one time 40% of young people with learning disabilities will be experiencing significant mental health problems and an analysis of the Office of National Statistics (ONS) surveys in 2004 has suggested that children with a learning disability are up to six times more likely to have a psychiatric disorder than their non-disabled peers.

Our role in school is to provide a safe environment where we support our pupils to create their own toolkit of essentials which supports them and the people around them to manage times of overwhelm, stress, change and upset. Our role is to also support our pupils in their understanding of what they can do to maintain positive mental health, what affects their mental health, and what they can do for themselves when they are experiencing a particular emotion.

Our aim is to help develop the protective factors which build resilience to mental health problems and to be a school for our pupils where:

- All Pupils are valued.
- Pupils have a sense of belonging and feel safe.
- Pupils are able to communicate and feel listened to with trusted adults about their emotions.
- Positive mental health is promoted and valued.

Our Staff

In addition to children's wellbeing, we recognise the importance of promoting our staff's mental health and wellbeing.

We recognise that our staff are our most important resource and are valued, supported and encouraged to develop personally and professionally within a caring, purposeful school community.

We recognise that there is a direct link between the wellbeing of our staff and the wellbeing of our pupils, and that the culture and values of our School is determined by the extent to which staff work towards our vision.

At Dysart, we believe that it is essential that all staff feel part of a supportive and valued team, have the opportunity to express their views and are supported to manage their workload within a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance.

Our aim is to be a school for our staff where:

- they are valued
- they are supported to build resilience to mental health problems
- they are supported to keep a healthy work-life balance
- they are supported to manage their family and work responsibilities
- positive mental health is promoted and valued
- we recognise and promote the importance of a happy team
- we ensure that there are effective methods of communication
- we take account of equality implications
- times of stress are addressed and staff are supported through it
- we learn from each other

Our Parents and Carers

Research shows that parents with children who have special needs have higher levels of stress and lower levels of wellbeing than parents with neuro typical children. A report published during Carers Week 2011 found that 75 per cent of carers, including parents with disabled children, had suffered ill health as a result of their caring work. Of these, 76 per cent had mental health problems, mainly depression, anxiety and stress.

At Dysart, we believe that it is essential that all parents and carers feel part of a supportive and valued community and have the opportunity to express their views and feel confident that they are being listened to.

Our aim is to be a school for our parents and carer's where:

- Parents and carers are key to understanding the child and this is supported.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to learn from each other and build support systems with other families.
- Parents and carers are supported to build resilience, particularly during times of transition or additional stress.
- They feel valued members of our school community
- They feel that they are actively involved within their child's education and 'Dysart journey'
- They feel able to come to us for support
- They feel listened to and that their voice is heard

How do we support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our whole school community?

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help our children and young people to feel supported, heard, accepted, valued and empowered.

To enable us to achieve this, we

1. Have engaged the whole school community to create a Dysart vision which supports mental health and resilience, and is understood by everyone. (See Appendix 2 on 'Vision statement - Mental Health and Wellbeing within Dysart School Community')
2. Help our children and young people to develop their communication skills to be able to have their own voice and choice and request help when they need it.
3. Help our children and young people to be resilient learners.
4. Teach our children and young people social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health – this is achieved through SCERTS, including the Zones of Regulation and individual and small group sessions run by the MHWB team.
5. Have established our own 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Team' who provide support to pupils in need of additional MHWB support across the school.
6. Have established our own 'Mental Health and Wellbeing **Plus** Team', consisting of an Educational Psychologist, Behaviour Analyst, Nurse and CAHMS practitioner to support early identification of children who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs.

7. Engage with our parents and carers from the moment they start their 'Dysart journey'.

8. Support and train staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

9. Have created the 'Essentials' at the centre of our curriculum, including each pupil to have an essentials enquiry which provides the information for each child to have their own Essentials Toolkit.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

Our Pupils

How do we support our pupil's wellbeing?

At Dysart, we believe that Emotional Wellbeing education is a priority across the school. It is explicitly taught through several different areas on the curriculum; 'Relationships Education', 'Relationships, Sex Education', Literacy and SPARKS. Every pupil has 4 outcomes which are SCERTS informed under the areas of 'Social, Emotional, Mental Health' and 'Communication' on a pupils EHC plan. However, it is modelled every day, in all that we do at Dysart, evidenced in staff, children and young people and parental relationships.

At Dysart many of our pupils have limited or no verbal communication and therefore find it difficult to express their concerns and feelings. In order to try and assess the mental health of a child or young person at Dysart, we need to take a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach that considers aspects such as observations, past history, and a reliance on information from third parties, including teachers, staff members, parents, and social workers, who know the pupil well. With this in mind, we have a 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Team' (MHWB) and a 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Team +' (MHWB+) at Dysart, consisting of:

MHWB Team

- The Mental Health Lead – Jo Williams
- Emotional Wellbeing practitioners – Rachel and Laeba
- Art Therapist – Michelle
- Drama Therapists – Shrav and Chloe
- Sound practitioner – Joanna
- Emotional Regulation practitioner – Erin

MHWB+ Team

- Head teacher – Leigh Edser
- The Mental Health Lead – Jo Williams
- Educational Psychologist – Sarah Lambe
- Behavioural Analyst – Matt Wickes
- CAMHS Childrens with Disabilities linked professional

Our Pupil Wellbeing offer:

Specialist offer

- Close work with our attached Educational Psychologist and Behaviour Analyst to identify pupils who may require additional

Targeted offer

- Nest – a specialist bespoke in-school supportive tool to develop pupils' emotional and communicative skills run by 2 Emotional Wellbeing practitioners.
- Dysart have a PBS team with 6 PBS trained coaches providing PBS support across the school including training for staff, workshops for parents and Tier 2 targeted support.
- The 'MHWB team' are responsible for communicating with the wider staff team at Dysart regarding pupils MHWB. The 'Nest' team meet weekly and provide CPD training for all staff across the year. The MH&WB team have also provided outreach support in the form of advice and training to other schools within the local area.
- All Dysart staff have access to request for support forms in order to make a referral for a pupil to receive additional support from the MHWB team. The 'MHWB' lead triages this request depending on need, and allocates support/advice which may include: a MDT core team meeting with SALT and OT, Behaviour data analysis, support in the Nest through small group or 1:1, working closely with a pupil's class team to embed the minimum classroom standards and to ensure the best possible support to a pupil.
- Specific pupils access targeted support, alongside staff support and training, from the 'MHWB+' team in order to provide appropriate targeted MHWB support in order to ensure pupils fully engage in their learning and achieve and progress.

Core offer

- Every family new to Dysart meets with the class teacher and/or SLT member to complete a 'pupil map'. This is a timeline of the child's life, from birth prior to beginning at Dysart. Families can give us as much or as little information as they

Our Staff

How do we support our staff's wellbeing?

Staff Well-being offer

Specialist offer

- Referrals + support from Occupational health

Targeted offer

- Class meetings to develop pupil and staff plans
- PPA covered by STA's
- STA/HLTA in every class to support teachers
- Flexibility around start/finish times for staff
- Flexibility around extra hours for STA's/HLTA's
- Reflective practice offered in 6 weekly blocks
- Teachers 'in class support' sessions for support with sessions
- Significant incidents – debriefing sessions for all staff involved in a significant incident
- Induction process and 'buddy system' for new staff members

Core offer

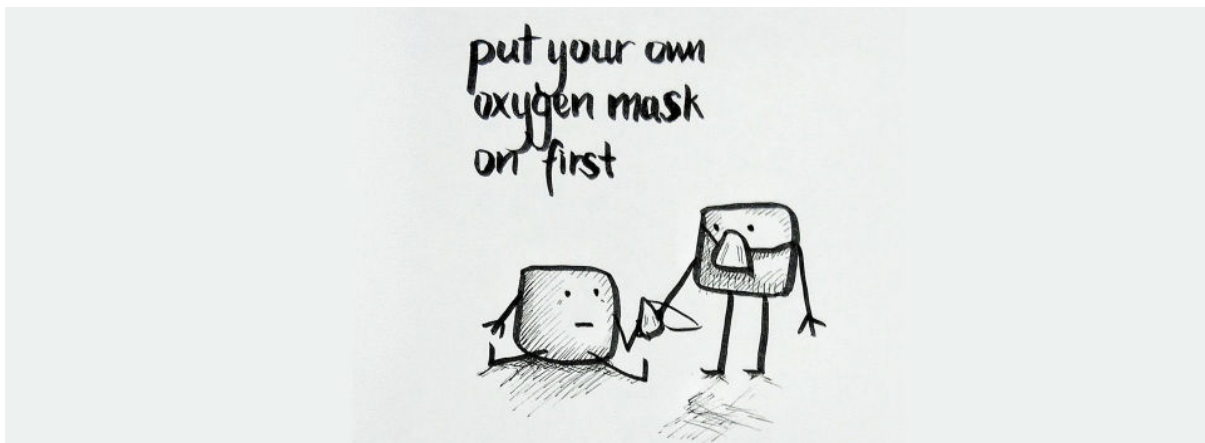
- Seeking help and support info leaflet for staff – sign posting to support networks
 - Confidential and free access to the Health Assured Employee Assistance programme (EAP)
 - Online MHWB training sessions on how to look after our own MH+WB and our colleagues.
 - Staff MHWB focused surveys and communication to staff of changes implemented as a result.
 - Dedicated time for a MHWB conversation within every staff member's appraisal
 - OHCATs Staff wellbeing policy
 - Dysart's MHWB strategy
 - Dedicated staff rooms
 - Staff Champions wellbeing team established and supported to offer regular events
 - 3 members of staff are trained Mental Health First Aiders
 - Access to 'Perk box' staff reward system
 - INSET and twilight training sessions on MH+WB
 - Culture of no blame and stigma for mental health needs of school community
 - 'Open door' policy for all SLT
 - Feedback box (in staffroom) where staff can share (anonymously) ideas for improvement of school ethos, model good working practices
 - Termly free tea and coffee for all classes
 - Regular 'go home early' days
 - Free Flu vaccinations for all staff
 - Providing creative opportunities for building morale and promoting wellbeing (e.g. croissant mornings, brew mornings).
 - Wellbeing week
 - Staff social events
- Being committed to the ethos of staff wellbeing and keeping in mind the workload and wellbeing of colleagues

- Valuing all members of staff in the school and acknowledging the important role that everyone takes
- Contributing to the ethos and social aspects of school life where possible to build morale and effective team spirit
- Developing and respecting shared areas where possible so that there is space to relax as well as appropriate work spaces.

Self-care:

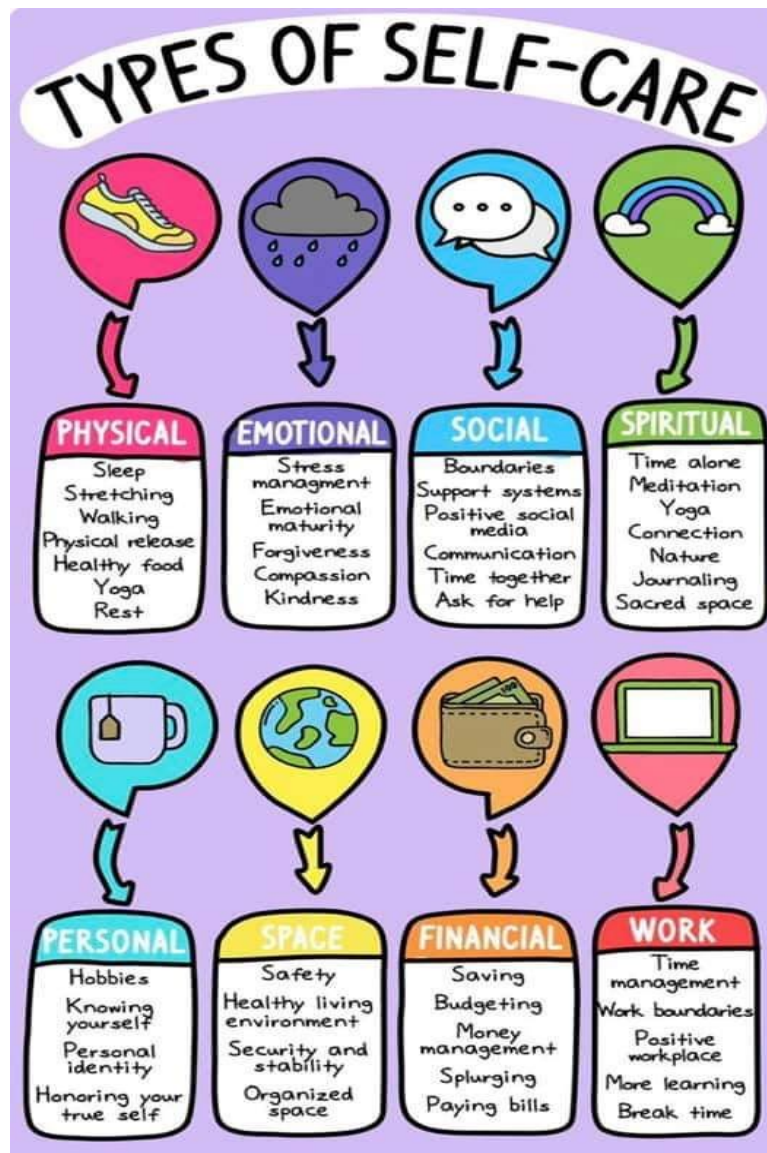
As a school we are equally committed to promoting and maintaining the wellbeing and resilience of children, their families and staff. All adults that work with children have an abiding ethical imperative to engage in self-care.

Good self-care is sound prevention, guarding staff against severe or chronic distress and professional impairment. Dysart actively promote a culture of self-care amongst its staff. We believe it is important that all staff are supported to look after their own wellbeing. This is not only important for them as individuals, but also for the quality of input and care they give the children and their families/wider school community. This is helpfully illustrated by the oxygen mask analogy '**put your oxygen mask on first before helping others**'.



Staff are required to consider self-care and how they maintain their own wellbeing through appraisal meetings, their CPD and accessing, and attending reflective group sessions.

Research recommends that managers tap into a variety of self-care strategies involving physical and emotional self-care.



The 'Good Thinking' website provides links and access to a range of mental well-being apps and resources for Londoners - <https://www.good-thinking.uk/> It is highly recommended that staff make use of this to support their emotional well-being and self-care endeavours.

General self-care pointers:

- Make personal and professional self-care a priority.
- Honestly assess your psychological and physical health. Focus on prevention rather than simply on remedying problems such as inactivity, over commitment or poor nutrition.
- Find time for activities that are personally restorative such as brisk walking or other forms of exercise, yoga, pleasure reading, journaling, meditation and massage.
- Avoid isolation. Identify sources of social support and use them. In addition to close family members and friends, sources of social support might include local groups.
- Establish and maintain professional connections that offer an opportunity to discuss the specific nature and stressors of your work. Consider when it may be helpful or necessary to tap into peer support groups or consultation. Pay attention

to possible warning signs such as feelings of helplessness, emotional swings, tendency to ruminate, loss of empathy or disconnecting from family and friends.

- Take occupational risks seriously, and be aware of the particular risks that challenging behavioural situations can present. If appropriate, educate yourself more fully about topics such as compassion fatigue, professional burnout, vicarious traumatising, and colleague assistance. Incorporate this learning into your professional training and continuing education.
- Develop realistic and reasonable expectations about work and your capabilities at any given time. Make appropriate accommodations or adjustments – such as seeking support before things become challenging.
- Pay attention to the need for balance in work, rest and play. Monitor carefully the substances (e.g. alcohol) and/or processes you use for relaxation or entertainment.
- Pursue opportunities for intellectual stimulation, including some outside your area of interests/occupation.
- Take steps to enhance your job satisfaction; utilise discussions with line managers and performance reviews.

Self-care activities should be tailored to your individual circumstances and needs.

The pointers above are intended as healthy food for thought to help you develop a personal action plan that works for you.

As a school we acknowledge that the practice of promoting positive well-being and self-care is an ongoing endeavour and as such we have mechanisms in place to ensure that we review these regularly.

Our Parents and carers

How do we support our parent's and carer's wellbeing?

Areas	Strategies
Parent Champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Champions wellbeing team established and supported to offer regular events • Coffee mornings for new parents in September and throughout the year • Monthly Parent 'get together' including: coffee mornings, workshops and guest speakers. • Parent Champions currently in the process of undergoing mental health ambassador training to enable us to provide 'parent supporting parent groups'.
Involvement within their child's educational journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly ½ hour curriculum consultation meetings across the year between teacher and parents • Individual pupil- family support • Access to support provided by the outreach team to support pupil behaviour/communication at home. • Parents with children who are receiving involvement from the MHWB+ team will meet with member of the MHWB+ team to ensure they are involved and are able to use the same approaches and strategies at home with their child. Inviting parents to Christmas and summer concerts and theme week celebrations. • Parent access on E4L assessment app • Class Dojo contact with parents
Family MHWB Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rolling programme of parental workshops focusing on MH+WB, positive behaviour support, SALT and OT ▪ Family support team ▪ MHWB focused workshops on how to look after parents MHWB. ▪ Core team meetings with the MDT ▪ MHWB focused workshops on how to look after our children's MH+WB. ▪ Parental education on child and family mental health ▪ Culture of no blame and stigma for mental health needs of school community • Dysart's MHWB strategy • Annual awards ceremony and whole school celebration BBQ • Sibling club • Holiday clubs
Communication with our families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly newsletter including MHWB section • Regular updates on school Instagram account. ▪ Seeking help and support info leaflet for parents ▪ Open door policy for parents to come and talk to SLT and class teachers as and when they need us ▪ Parent wellbeing policy ▪ Home/ school contact books communicate to parents and carers about their child's day ▪ Parent access on E4L assessment app